



# Evaluation of the Caribbean Regional Development Program, 2011/12 to 2016/17

## Summary Report

April 18, 2018

### Why is it important?

This evaluation was conducted to provide an evidence-based neutral assessment of development assistance provided through the Caribbean Regional Development Program to Canadians, Parliamentarians, Ministers, Central Agencies, Global Affairs Canada management, partners and beneficiaries.

It aims to contribute to informed decision-making and to support policy and program improvements by helping to identify good practices and lessons.

- **Evaluation Period:** 2011/12 to 2016/17
- **Total bilateral aid disbursements** 2011/12 to 2016/17: \$336 million, with an average disbursement of \$56 million per year
- **Data Methods:**
  - key stakeholder interviews (n=177)
  - group interviews (n=2), including;
    - 22 beneficiaries,
    - 20 implementing partners
    - 3 local government program officials
  - site visits (n=5; 4 projects)
  - project review (n=16 projects, assessment of implementation and results)
  - document and literature review
  - program financial analysis
  - document review
- **Evaluation Completed:** February 2018

### What the evaluation assessed:

Global Affairs Canada's development assistance programming in the Caribbean between 2011/12 and 2016/17, with a focus on bilaterally funded projects supported by the Americas Branch (NGM).

The Caribbean Regional Development Program includes 11 island states and 3 continental states.

### The evaluation questions that were asked:

#### Relevance:

- To what extent were Global Affairs Canada's Caribbean regional development programming strategy and priorities aligned with the region's development needs and priorities?

#### Effectiveness

- To what extent did Global Affairs Canada's programming contribute to achieving intended immediate, intermediate and ultimate outcomes?
- What factors influenced the effectiveness of the Caribbean Regional Development Program?

#### Sustainability

- To what extent have, or will, the results and benefits of Global Affairs Canada's programming continue beyond its development assistance?

#### Efficiency

- Are there any opportunities to improve the efficiency of Global Affairs Canada's programming?

#### Cross-Cutting Theme

- To what extent did the Caribbean regional development Program integrate gender equality considerations in its development programming? Have expected results been achieved?

# What the evaluation found

## Relevance

Programming was aligned with the region's needs and priorities, as well as with Canada's policies over the years. Canada's support and expertise enabled mutually beneficial collaboration in a number of areas, including support towards gender equality. The program was perceived positively and recognized for its stability and consistency in supporting the same sectors over the years, thus contributing to the program's potential for development impact. The regional approach to the Program design was relevant and offered value. At the same time however, limited visibility restrained the potential for public recognition of Canada's commitment and contributions to international development in the region.

## Effectiveness

- For the projects examined, the Caribbean Regional Development Program contributed to increased capacity across the region and achieved valuable results across all sectors. However more time was required to achieve consistent longer-term results.
- While the regional approach has made a difference in terms of achieving valuable development results, it could make a greater difference by increasing ownership, knowledge sharing and policy dialogue.
- Varying levels of synergy across projects examined hampered leveraging and maximization of results.

## Sustainability

- The Program's focus on training and the adoption of promising practices across the region contributed to the Program's reach and sustainable results.
- At the same time, variable efforts were placed on sustainability across projects and in many cases planning for sustainability came well after project implementation had started. Challenges to sustainability remained: project complexity and breadth, lack of flexibility to adjust to specific country contexts, length of support, and limited synergies across some projects.

## Efficiency

- The program was generally well administered and efficient in terms of financial resource management.
- At the same time, the efficiency of the Program in the field was limited in part by corporate constraints over which it had limited control.
- Communications, management matrix structure, corporate constraints, information management resources and access to technical expertise remained challenges to operational efficiency.

## Cross-Cutting Theme

- Canada has been a key partner in supporting gender equality; some projects added value through a focus on specific gender equality issues (discrimination, marginalization and empowerment).
- While the program included references to gender equality in most of the projects' approved logic models, its integration, treatment, monitoring, and resource allocation was uneven across projects.
- Although access to gender specialists has been limited at headquarters and in the field, their involvement has benefited the program. At the same time, greater access to technical expertise and a stronger analytical framework would have been required to add more value to Program operations.

## Recommendations and management response

### Recommendation 1:

Complement regional programming with country-specific investments and include national governments in regional projects. (Relevance)

**Agreed:** The Caribbean Regional Development Programme recognizes the importance of addressing regional objectives and issues by working closely with Caribbean countries to respond to their needs and guide investments. Tailored country-specific investments may be necessary to respond most effectively to specific needs, for example in the context of reconstruction after a disaster.

### Recommendation 2:

Develop a short plan of action articulating how the program intends to promote knowledge sharing, visibility, policy dialogue and capacity building, to better integrate these into daily operations, and ensure common understanding of these concepts among staff and partners. (Effectiveness - Sustainability)

**Agreed:** The programme will develop a short Knowledge and Policy Development Action Plan that includes the promotion of knowledge sharing, visibility, policy dialogue, and capacity building. This will be complemented by a Communications Strategy which seeks to increase the visibility and understanding of Canada's international assistance contributions in the region and at the individual country level.

### Recommendation 3:

Develop a short plan of action articulating how the program intends to promote and integrate gender equality into daily operations, and ensure common understanding of gender equality among staff and partners. (Effectiveness)

**Agreed:** In keeping with *Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy*, the Caribbean Regional Development Programme will develop a Gender Action Plan which indicates how international assistance investments will be aligned to meet the GE targets of the policy. The GE Action Plan will include GE integration in daily operations, including GE analysis to inform project design, consultation, as well as monitoring and implementation. The GE Action Plan will also include Policy Dialogue and Communications, indicating how the programme will engage government, civil society, and regional partners on GE. Canada's approach to international assistance will also be included, and how it will link to the GE communications and public diplomacy efforts of Canada's Heads of Mission in the region.

### Recommendation 4:

Review the current management matrix structure to improve communication, coordination, and cohesion among staff. (Efficiency)

**Agreed and Completed.** The Caribbean Regional Development Programme team has reviewed and updated its matrix management structure to ensure greater efficiency (including better communication, coordination, and cohesion among staff). The modified matrix management structure has been fully consulted with priogramme. It more clearly elaborates staff roles and responsibilities, as well as the reporting relationships of staff to managers. It will be further updated to include aspects of the 2018 re-organization of the Central America and Caribbean Bureau team at headquarters.

# Considerations for Future Programming

## **Considerations for Future Regional Programming in geographic branches**

- 1) Given that countries in a region are not all equally motivated by regional cooperation, programs may consider regional programming with select countries that are more supportive of this approach.
- 2) To inform the program design, facilitate coordination and avoid duplication, regional programs could map current and planned initiatives in the region including funding from all donors.
- 3) Simplicity of project design at the national and regional level can allow for better accommodation of the limited institutional capacity of implementing partners. It also helps facilitate coordination with multiple stakeholders, as well as project monitoring and evaluation.

## **Considerations for international assistance programming**

- 1) Decentralized programs that provide field-based teams in partner countries with advisory and managerial capacity, and with program and financial authority, may be better equipped to provide aid efficiently.
- 2) The presence of sector experts in the field may help programs deliver on commitments, including those related to the action areas set out in the Feminist International Assistance Policy, such as gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.
- 3) Access to corporate information management tools and resources in the field is essential for decentralized programming to function effectively and efficiently.